

## **Notice of Availability and Opportunity to Comment Flat Country Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

The McKenzie River Ranger District on the Willamette National Forest has completed a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Flat Country Project which is now available for comment. The Responsible Official for this project is Darren Cross, District Ranger at the McKenzie River Ranger District. The Flat Country Project proposes to provide a sustainable supply of timber products, increase vegetative habitat complexity and hardwood composition along streams, actively manage stands to improve stand conditions (in terms of density, diversity, and structure), and sustainably manage the network of roads in the project area. The proposed project is located east of Highway 126, near the town of Blue River, Oregon. Three alternatives were analyzed in the DEIS; a no action alternative (Alternative 1) and two action alternatives (Alternatives 2 and 3). Alternative 2 proposes 4,438 acres of treatment and Alternative 3 proposes 1,302 acres of treatment. Alternative 2 is the Forest Service preferred alternative.

Harvest treatments would include thinning, gap creation, dominant tree release, shelterwood with reserves (a type of regeneration harvest), and skips. Riparian Reserve treatments would include thinning, fall-and-leave gaps, and fall-and-leave instream wood. Meadow enhancement would include removal of trees, followed by pile burning. Post-harvest fuel treatments would include pile burning and post-harvest underburning. Roadside fuel breaks would include removal of small trees and pruning with subsequent pile burning. Transportation related activities would include temporary road construction, road maintenance, road decommissioning, and road storage.

The DEIS is available on the project website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=53966>. Electronic, written, and oral comments will be accepted. Electronic comments will only be accepted through the Forest Service online comment system, available at <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public//CommentInput?Project=53966>. Written comments must be mailed to the following address: Darren Cross c/o Dean Schlichting, McKenzie River Ranger District, 57600 Highway 126, McKenzie River, Oregon, 97413. Written comments may also be hand delivered to this address during normal business hours (8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays) or phoned in to Dean Schlichting (NEPA Planner) at 541-822-7214.

The 45-day comment period for this project will be published in the Federal Register on January 31st, 2020. The comment period will end March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at midnight Pacific time. All public comments (including attachments) must be postmarked or delivered by this date. The 45-day comment period for the DEIS began on the date of publication of the NOA in the Federal Register. Those wishing to comment should not rely on dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. It is the responsibility of each person who provides a comment to ensure that their materials were received.

Only those people who submit specific written comments that meet the requirements under Forest Service regulations 36 CFR 218 during designated comment period will be eligible to participate in the administrative review ("objection") process. Specific written comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered, but do not meet the requirements under 36 CFR 218 and will not be eligible for administrative review. Comments received in response to this solicitation (including names and addresses of those who comment) will be considered part of the public record for this project, made available for public inspection, and released if requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

If you have any questions concerning this project, please contact Dean Schlichting (NEPA Planner) at (541) 822-7214 or Darren Cross (District Ranger) at (541) 822-7200, or visit the above project website.

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